



Bank Topics

Issue 15

December– February

Greetings friends!
Hope you had a wonderful and restful summer break. August is usually a period of holidays, garden parties, barbeques and foreign holidays: the month when we all hope for good weather and are often disappointed. Whatever your weather, I hope you had a good break and you are now ready for harvest and the inevitable cool weather undoubtedly round the corner. I am excited about what God has in store for us further ahead. Talking of foreign holidays, my family and I went to Kenya to visit relations. Technically though, you can't call that a holiday. As I write we have just come back and I feel like I need another holiday to recover from that Kenyan trip. And as if being tired is not bad enough, Brussels Airline lost my suitcase with all my **Sunday bests**...as I write they have not located it...I remain hopeful.



The trip though was good and enjoyable with loads and loads of blessings. On Sunday the 24th of August we worshipped at Kimathi Presbyterian church where I was the guest speaker and the title of the sermon was **making friends with God and deepening that relationship**. It was a very lively service with praise and worship being led by the youth and Sunday school children.

We presented them with a cheque of Kenya shillings 250,000, for the building of two Sunday school classrooms. [In honouring the wishes of most people from the pastorate I have not indicated what each person donated]. The entire congregation and indeed the children of Kimathi send their heartfelt gratitude's and warm regards to all of you who donated these funds. They have assured me that the funds will be used specifically for this purpose and they will keep us updated with the building progress. It was a very unique experience to witness over 300 hundred university students attending church on a Sunday morning. I will put all the photos in a power point and show them in church presently. Just like the UK, August is also a time of weddings in Kenya and on Saturday 30th, I presided over a wedding of a nephew. Weddings offer families an opportunity to come together and enjoy each other's company as they celebrate together. It's worth remembering though, that some people are not fortunate enough to be surrounded by family members. And as I reflect on life in our three congregations, I am conscious that there is a large and growing number of people who live alone and don't see their relatives as often as they would like to. Granted, today we all lead busy lives and often families are scattered over the country residing in areas where they can be gainfully employed. I know

some people whom I have been pastorally visiting who find evenings difficult and some for whom week-ends are the loneliest time. I recognise and acknowledge the crucial and important role the pastoral care teams play in plugging this gap among the lonely in our community whenever they can. I pray that they may be strengthened for this selfless work. During our Lords time here on earth, he encouraged us to invite those who were not in a position to return a favour when we have parties and meals together. He deliberately went out of his way to seek and eat with all manner of people, including many who the society had marginalised and treated as outcasts. We could do well to pick a leaf from Christ by inviting people who might be lonely in our communities to our parties and social gathering. Such an invitation may just be the highlight of a lonely person's life and who knows, it might be a turning point in their lives. Blessings on you all as you contemplate the invitations and the autumn season ahead! Shalom.

Rev G.



BANK TOP CHURCH - CONTACTS

Church Telephone Number		593393
Minister	Rev George Mwaura	302540
Church Leader	Mr A Guthrie	591185
Secretary/Treasurer	Mrs V Singleton	305401
Organist – contact	Mrs A Smith	693740
Church Hall Hire	Mrs H Guthrie Mrs V Singleton	591185 305401
Pulpit Supply	Mrs J Skidmore	307130
Flower Secretaries	Mrs M Flitcroft Mrs C Rideout	301328 596360
Choir Leader	Mrs A Smith	693740
Newsletter Editor	Mrs J Partington	07725988949
Serving Elders	V Constantine, Christine Counsell, M Flitcroft, Andy Guthrie, James Keen, Graham Naylor, Jill Partington, Carol Rideout, Val Singleton, Julie Skidmore, Alison Spence,	
Sunday Worship	10.30am Morning Service and Sunday School Church Parade fourth Sunday of month in Jan, Sept, Nov and the Sermons. Communion during the morning service on the second Sunday each month	
Guides	Monday at 7.30pm (contact Mrs V Constantine)	593034
Bank Top Brownies	Monday at 5.45pm (contact Miss K Grainger)	593692
The Oaks Brownies	Tuesday at 6.00pm (contact Mrs G Brown)	306867
Rainbows	Thursday at 6.00pm (contact E Robinson)	415113
Bank Top Art Group	Monday at 1.00pm (contact Mrs V Singleton)	305401
Mother & Toddlers	Tuesday from 9.30 – 11.00am (contact Val Singleton)	305401
Lace & Craft Group	Wednesday 7.00 – 9.00pm (contact: Jean Greer)	594127
Fitness Classes Ladies only	Tuesday 2:00 - 3:00 (Contact Andrew Horvath)	07968 052730
Adult Yoga	Tuesday from 7:45pm - 9:15pm (Contact Jenny Dowling)	07578 108676
Theatre Works	Wednesday from 3:45 - 6:15 (Contact Lauren Bateman)	07999 634208

For Baptisms, (which are held during the Morning Service), Weddings, Funerals, Sick Visiting or Home Communion, please contact the Rev George Mwaura.
If you would like to join our Direct Offering scheme, through the Envelope system, please contact Mrs Val Singleton, who is also available to give advice on Gift Aid.
We also have a Church Memorial Fund – contributions to the treasurer, Val Singleton
We are a pastorate together with Egerton URC and Red Lane URC
We are a member of Churches Together in Astley Bridge.

WHAT'S ON AT BANK TOP?

Mondays	9.30 - 11.30am 1.00 - 3.00pm 5.45 - 7.15pm 7.30 - 9.15pm	Bank Top Child-minders Bank Top Artists Bank Top Brownies Bank Top Guides
Tuesdays	9.30 - 11.00am 1:45 - 2:45pm 6.00 - 7.30pm 7.45 - 9.15pm	Bank Top Toddler Group Ladies only Exercise Classes The Oaks Brownies Yoga with Jenny
Wednesdays	3:45 - 6.15pm 7:00 - 9:00pm	Theatre School Bank Top Craft Classes
Thursdays	6.00 - 7.00pm	Bank Top Rainbows
Saturdays (first Sat of the month) (third Sat of the month)	12.00 - 1.00pm 10.00 - 3.00pm	Saturday Lunches £3 Adult/£1 Child Bolton Progressive Threads
Parties: You can hire our room for your party for just £40		



Family Bible Readings

December

7th	Mark	1:1-8
14th	John	1:6-8, 19-28
21st	Luke	20:1-16, 1:26-38
28th	Luke	2:22-40

January

4th	John	1:1-9, 10-18
11th	Mark	1:4-11
18th	John	1:43-51
25th	Mark	1:14-20

February

1st	Mark	1:21-28
8th	Mark	1:29-39
15th	Mark	9:2-9
22nd	Mark	1:9-15



December

7th	Pauline Birch
14th	Barbara Harper
21st	Christine Catherall
28th	Syd & Maureen Roocroft

January

4th	The Guthries
11th	Vicky Constantine
18th	Pat McNulty
25th	Christine Counsell

February

1st	Jill Partington
8th	The Owens
15th	In memory of Phyllis Walsh
22nd	Val Singleton



Birthday wishes go to:

December

21st James Snelson
30th Adam Johns
31st Hannah Taylor



January

4th Ava Chester
8th Grace Taylor
10th Theodore Marsden
13th James Astley
21st Larissa Collier
24th Emma Johns
27th Isobel Hogan

February

17th Oliver Matkin
25th Lucy Chester

CLEANING ROTA

December

5th L Ridyard & G Brown
12th J Marsden & V Constantine
19th P McNulty & J Seddon
26th C Rideout & A Hardman

January

2nd A Myers & I Larkin
9th J Keen &
16th V Singleton & M Batty
23rd C Catherall & M Flitcroft
30th C Counsell & A Spence

February

6th Ann & Richard Smith
13th The Guthries
20th L Ridyard & G Brown
27th J Marsden & V Constantine



If for any reason your name is against a date that you can not make, please try to swap with someone else on the rota.

Bank Top URC

ADVENT BRUNCH



Saturday 6th December
10.00am - 1.00pm

£3.00 Adults/£1.00 Children includes:
(Egg/Bacon/Sausage Barm and Mince Tart/Chocolate Roll)

Many attractions; including Tombola, Home Produce, Raffles & Father Christmas

WINTER WATCH 2015

Once again the Winter Watch Cafe will open it's door on 9th January 2015, each week-end until the end of March. Friday & Saturday evenings from 9pm.until 1.30am, Sunday evenings from 9pm until 12midnight.

Lots of hot food & drinks are served. Hot showers are available. On some nights a chiropodist is on hand to help and at other times a hairdresser is available all at no cost.

This last winter over 2.500 meals were served over the three month period to vulnerable people who needed these services.

There are newspapers, magazines, games ie chess, dominoes cards etc. & lots of chat for people to relax with friends.

Bank Top Church has several volunteers who over the years have taken part in this project.

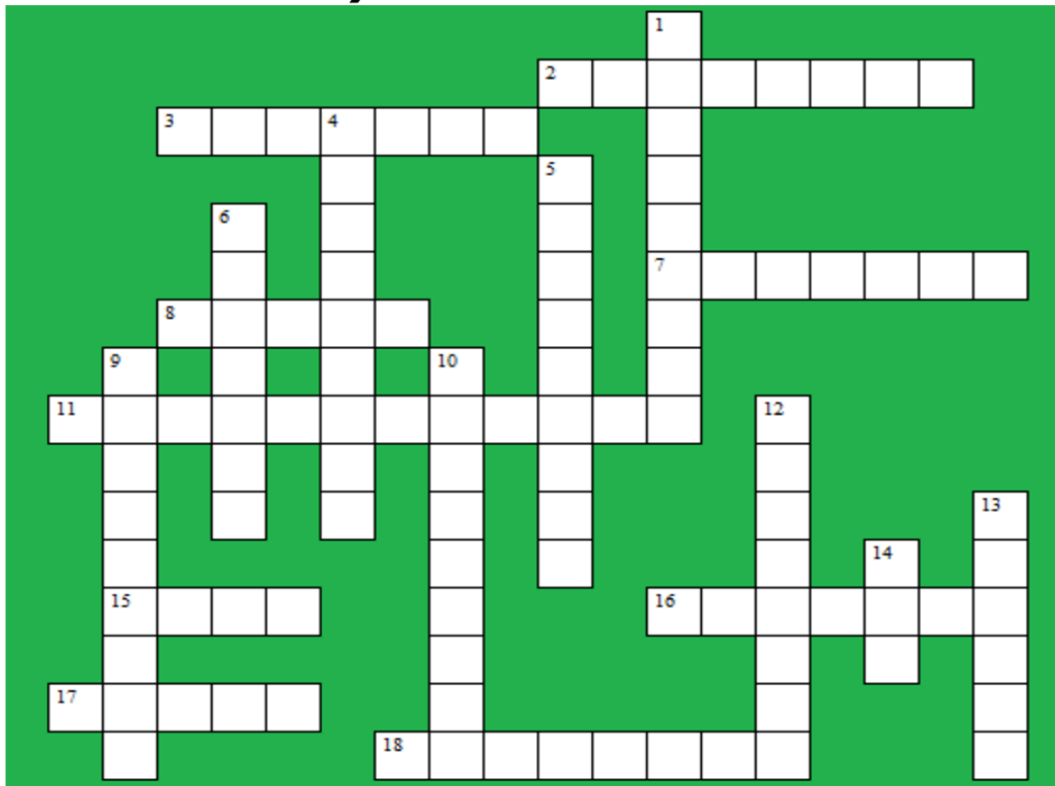
Thank you to everyone who continues to support us.

See the letter from Urban Outreach.

Maureen R.

Kid's Zone

A Merry Christmas Crossword



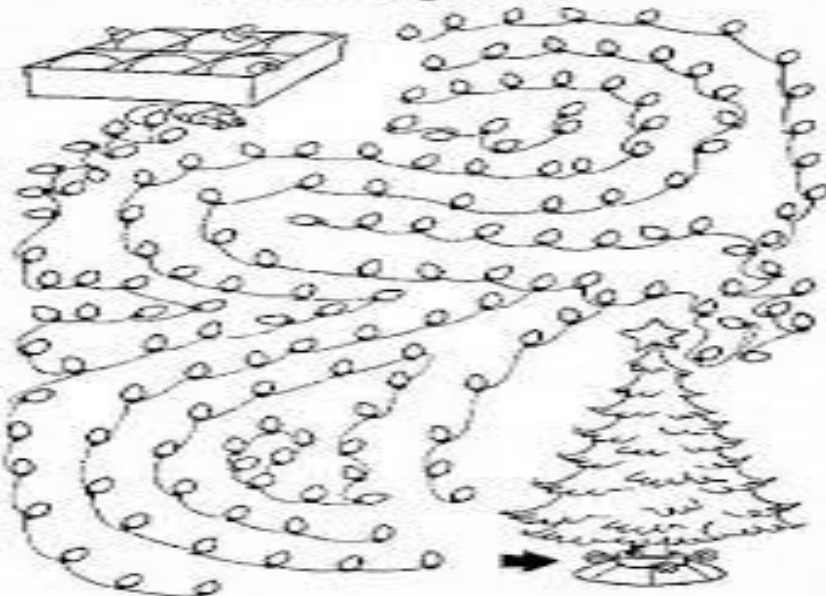
ACROSS

- 2 Giant socks that might get filled with presents
- 3 Santa gets in your house through this
- 7 The only reindeer whose name begins with the letter p
- 8 Deck the halls with boughs of this
- 11 The night before Christmas
- 15 What's in Santa's bag?
- 16 Reindeer with the red nose
- 17 Person who brings gifts to good children
- 18 Christmas falls in this month

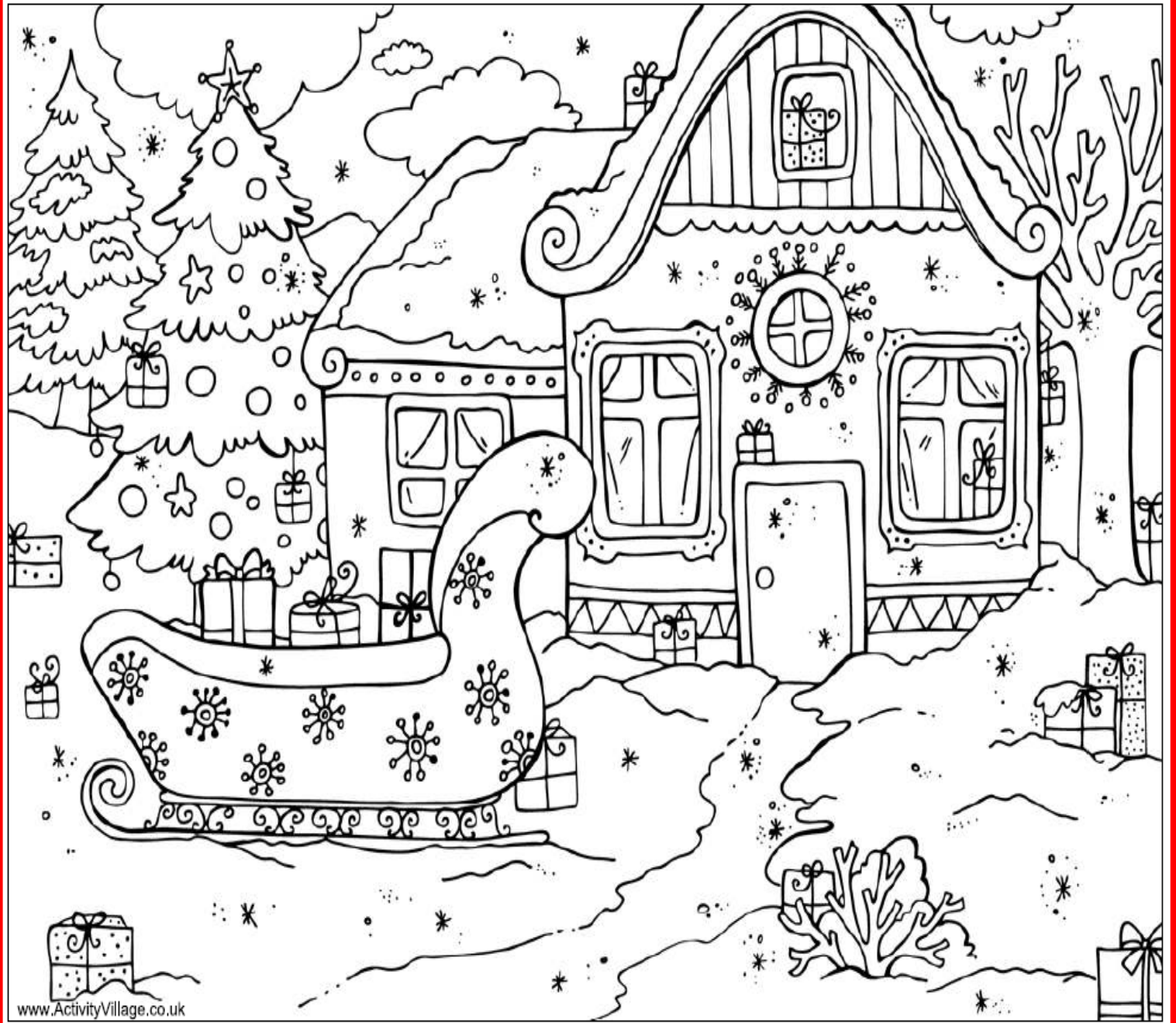
DOWN

- 1 Where Santa lives
- 4 If you stand under this, you might get kissed.
- 5 Things you hang on a Christmas tree
- 6 A snack you leave out for Santa
- 9 December 25th
- 10 Yummy red and white candy
- 12 Eight of these pull Santa's sleigh
- 13 Santa says this
- 14 A helper who makes toys

Pick the Right Path

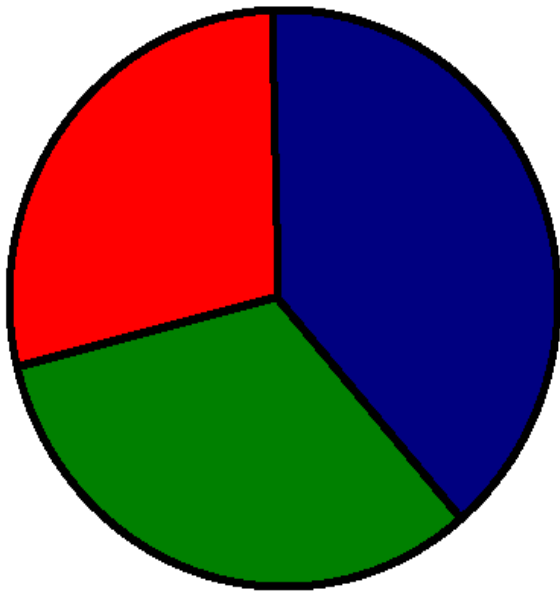


Children please colour the picture and bring back to Church so that we can make a wonderful Christmas display.



Name

**Things that will follow me
all the days of my life (Psalm 23)**



Thy goodness



Thy mercy



The nagging fear that I'm going to have to introduce two people whose names I cannot remember

theologygrams.wordpress.com

Church Ladies With Typewriters

They're Back! Those wonderful Church Bulletins! Thank God for the church ladies with typewriters. These sentences actually appeared in church bulletins or were announced at church services:

The Fasting & Prayer Conference includes meals.

Scouts are saving aluminium cans, bottles and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.

The sermon this morning: 'Jesus Walks on the Water. 'The sermon tonight:' Searching for Jesus.'

I'm a Little Reindeer

- I'm a little reindeer, ready to fly.
- I'll pull Santa's sleigh up in the sky.
- Christmas is here; we can't be late.
- All the children just cannot wait!



Christmas Bells

by John Clare

The singing waits, a merry throng,
At early morn with simple skill,
Yet imitate the angel's song,
And chant their Christmas ditty still;

And, mid the storm that dies and swells
By fits, in hummings softly steals
The music of the village bells,
Ringing round their merry peals.





Dear Friends

Traditionally Christmas starts with Advent Sunday, which is on the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day, so sometimes we're confused

when it pops up in November, rather than December. Anyway, it's the start of the Liturgical year for most Christians.

Now at Bank Top we know that that is wrong. Christmas actually starts with Advent Brunch when through an act of a very loving God we are offered bacon, sausage and egg barm served up by His little angels dressed as Guides. His archangels strive faithfully in the smoke and heat of the battle (or the kitchen as it is sometimes known.) Now we know that battles draw blood and I would like to suggest that as a suitable tribute to their heroic endeavours a slice of black pudding would be a fitting tribute and should be added to the menu. I'm presuming all right minded people will be behind me with this suggestion. We just need to agree who's going to tell said Archangels. Any volunteers?

I write this letter on the day that we collected in our shoeboxes. 118 little (and not so little) boxes of love.



It is a really wonderful way to start the run-in to Christmas, knowing that these boxes will go to people who have so little, from us who have so much. It really is giving with no expectation of getting anything in return. It is truly Christian giving and is probably one of the few examples we will encounter in the commercialised frenzy that has become our mockery of the stable birth and gift bearing wise men. But each one of those 118 boxes belie society's feeding frenzy. It is a wonderful thing to have done. Thank you. Just on another personal note - Advent means we can sing O come, O come Emmanuel. If

there is only one reason to be joyful for the arrival of Advent then that can be it. No skipping of verses. The full monty, bring it on!

There will be our normal Midnight Communion Service on Christmas Eve at 11:30. You are all very welcome, bring your friends and neighbours, welcome the babe.

After Christmas, New Year lurches in with those ill kept resolutions. I'm up for thinking what Bank Top's resolution should be. What would make 2015 a great year for Bank Top? It's very tempting to sit back and dream great things. And often decide that they're actually too difficult. At that point the temptation (and it's always worth remembering that temptation did not end with Jesus in the desert 2000 year ago) is to fall back on the "all we can do is keep our heads above the water." Revert to business as usual, nose to the grindstone. Trundle on. But there are other ways – We are supposed to be led by the Holy Spirit and, you may be astonished by this, the Church Meeting is supposedly the place where we discern the will of the Spirit. I admit that I probably don't invite the Spirit into our Church Meetings very often.

They're already "*Revert to business as usual, nose to the grindstone. Trundle on.*" So on a personal note, maybe that should be a resolution for me to think about and maybe it's one you should hold me to.

And as an alternative to thinking up our own grand plans, another option is to look around us and see what God is already doing nearby, what could we help in, where could we make a difference. I was struck by the suggestion of "messy church." Activities put on for children, normally on a Saturday. Cutting and gluing – messy. But yes we don't have the space, the people, the time so it's a no.

But why would we want to do it? You'd need more children, more helpers. It's not a job for one church. It's a job for a group of churches. Not a formal group, just churches near each other. Maybe somewhere nearby there's another church or another couple of churches saying "too hard for us." Just a thought.

So Christmas blessings to you all, have a wonderful time and know that He is there waiting to be invited in.

God Bless

Andy, Heather and all the family

On 29th September, Bank Top Brownies held a Coffee Evening in aid of Macmillan. The Brownies decorated biscuits and made cakes.

They helped to serve these plus tea and coffee to the people who kindly came along to support this wonderful event. Some Brownies made their promise during the evening. Finally the Brownies finished with some singing led by Val Singleton (*Many thanks!!)

On behalf of Bank Top Brownies, Karen and myself, We would like to thank everyone who supported this event, we made a grand total of £140.41.



Karen and Elizabeth

Bank Top Brownies.

Bank Top Guides - Children in Need

We asked the Guides in September who they would like to do some fundraising for, and they answered 'Children in Need'. They decided to have a sponsored silence, which as you may imagine is a challenge at the best of times for a group of usually very noisy Guides!

During one of our meetings in October, we held a half hour sponsored silence, and to our amazement no-one spoke (not even a Guider!) for the whole half an hour. We were really impressed with how the Guides carried on with their activity in complete silence.

We also held a 'Fashion Show', when some of the guides dressed in two different outfits and walked the 'cat-walk', otherwise known as the long piece of blue carpet which runs the length of the Church hall. Some of our other Guides made some beautiful home-made cakes and biscuits to sell during the interval.

We have raised over £200 (from sponsor money and cake sales) which we are going to send to Children in Need.

Thank you to all the Guides, parents and Guiders for their support with this fundraising.

Vicky Constantine



FINANCE REPORT



OFFERTORY

Aug

Cash Collection	273.26
Envelope Collection	468.81
Standing Orders	619.50
TOTAL	<u>1361.57</u>

Sept

Cash Collection	257.84
Envelope Collection	449.00
Standing Orders	639.50
TOTAL	<u>1346.34</u>

Oct

Cash Collection	216.57
Envelope Collection	400.36
Standing Orders	639.50
TOTAL	<u>1256.43</u>

BRUNCHES

September	194.20
October	203.00
November	159.20

JARS OF GRACE

August	19.93
September	13.21
October	32.20

50/50 CLUB

Sept

A Sutton	50.00	67
J Skidmore	30.00	47
J Else	20.00	1

October

D Canham	50.00	42
J Battersby	30.00	56
J Else	20.00	1

November

L Ridyard	50.00	48
V Constantine	30.00	71
V Constantine	20.00	69

July - Jars of Change for Lent to Water Aid	220.00
Sept - Harvest donations to Winter Watch	201.40
Sept - Harvest produce to Bolton Hospice	

Thank you to all those people who continue to support any or all of the above

FINANCE – PLEASE READ

This article is a follow-up from the financial breakdown that Val Singleton explained to us during our recent service.

First let me thank each and every one of you for the continued support that is given to Bank Top throughout the year.

It is heart warming to be among so many caring individuals that form the Bank Top family. They say that time and tide waits for no man, and where the finances of Bank Top are concerned that is very true. The recent changes to the contribution Bank Top has to make to the Synod, together with the usual inflationary pressures that occur means we will be running the Church at a loss in 2015. The offerings we receive from regular attenders is a wonderful gift; however we would like to ask that you consider giving even on the weeks when you are unable to attend.

There are a number of ways in which this can be done;

Standing Order

If you can set up a regular standing order, this gives Val an advanced picture of monies that are coming in. If you are a tax payer and fill out a gift aid form then Bank Top can also claim money back from the government.

For a [Bank Top Standing Order Request](#) form you can either go on the Bank Top Website or ask Val; (all your personal detail are kept confidential and the only person that can alter a standing order is yourself)

Offering Envelopes

These are designed so that you can budget a regular offering each week and place them in the collection whenever you are able to join us at our regular Sunday services. (If you would like some envelopes for 2015, please ask Val now)

Sunday Service Offerings

Each week we collect cash offerings offering from people attending the Sunday service.

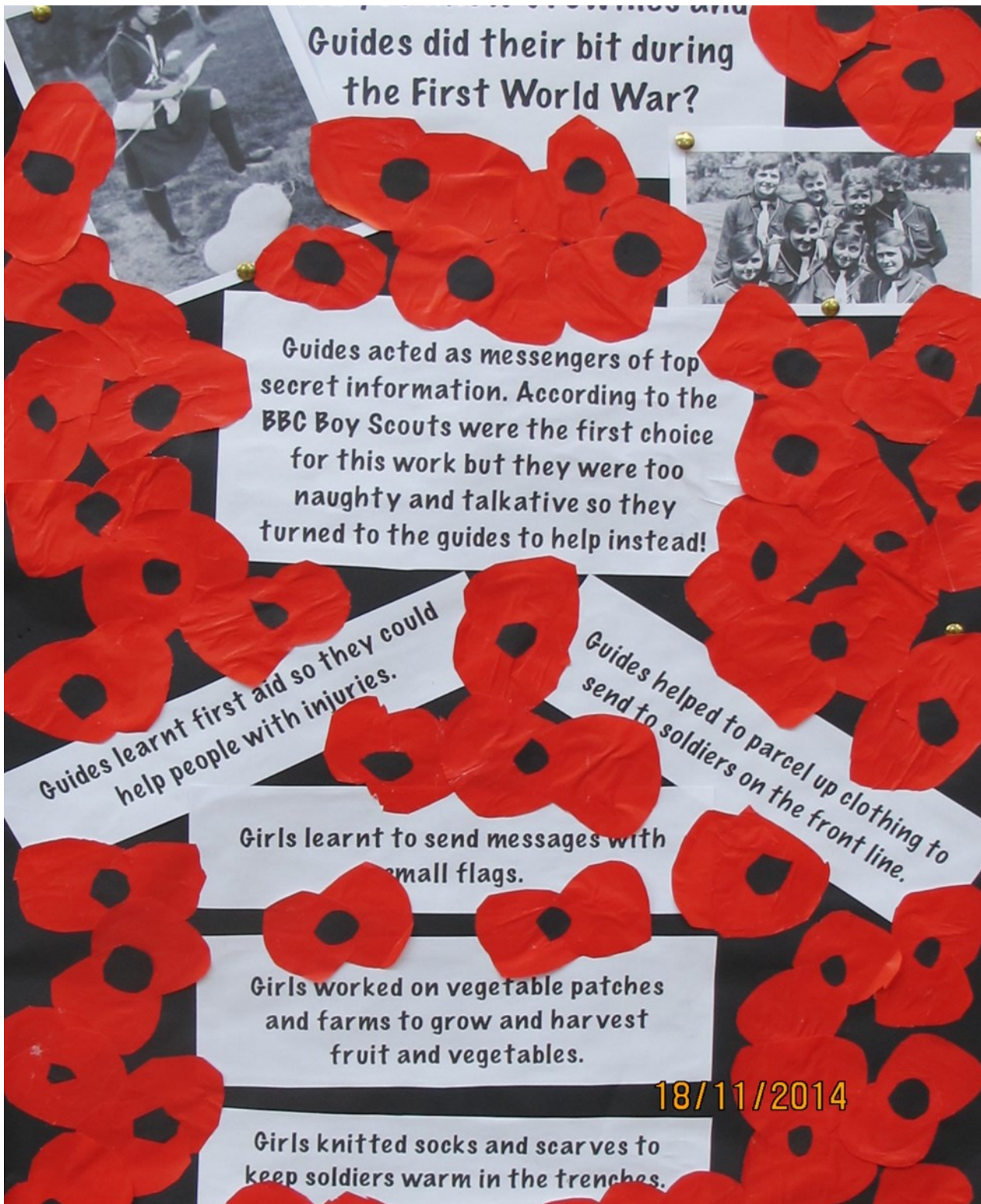
Bank Top has long been a communal focal point for many groups and organisations, so anything you are able to give to help Bank Top raise the funding needed would be gratefully received.

Thanks and God Bless

From 2015 we will pay £5.89 per week for every person who regularly attends church.

If you missed the service on the 26th October which went more deeply into church finances – then you can find copies of the figures used during that service in the church foyer.

Did you know:-



Thank you to The Oaks Brownies for this beautiful poster

Please pray for all our friends who are ill and for the skills of the doctors, nurses and family who care for them.

Please pray for all who live alone and cannot get out.

Try to visit them before Christmas.

Please pray for Joan Bond and Bert Counsell who are both currently in hospital.





Bank Top Christmas Party Night!
Saturday 13th December (7.30-11.30)
At Dunscair Golf Club
Tickets £15 (Adults), £5.00 (Children)
(Includes Buffet Supper and Disco)
(places still available)



**BANK TOP URC
CHRISTMAS SERVICES**



Come and join us this Christmas for all or any of our services:

Sunday, 21st December, 10.30am
Children's Nativity

Sunday, 21st December
5.45pm: Carols on the Community Garden
6.15pm: Mince Pies & Mulled Wine in Church
6.30pm: Christingle & Carol Service in Church
(retiring collection for Christian Aid)

Wednesday, 24th December, 11.30pm
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Thursday, 25th December, 10.30am
Christmas Day Family Service

A Christmas Prayer

Jesus, the Light of the World, as we celebrate your birth may we begin to see the world in the light of the understanding you give us. As you chose the lowly, the outcasts, and the poor to receive the greatest news the world had ever known, so may we worship you in meekness of heart. May we also remember our brothers and sisters less fortunate than ourselves in this season of giving. Amen.

- Urban Outreach have written to thank us for our donation of £206.40 which we gave to Winter Watch in September. In the Winter Watch café this year they served over 2,500 meals in the 3 months they were open from January to the end of March, and over 100 volunteers helped to provide the service. Storehouse has been busy giving out food parcels to between 300 to 400 people each week. So please continue to donate to the Grub Tub which is sited at the back of our church.
- WaterAid wrote to thank us for the donations from our Jars of Change Appeal. We managed to raise £220. Our gift means that more people in the third world can be supplied with clean water.
- And finally we received a letter from Bolton Hospice thanking us for the donations of food from our Harvest table. The gifts are very much appreciated.



**Bank Top Guides have been busy making wreaths for Christmas
They are now very busy organising the Advent Brunch
The Brownies and Rainbows will also be singing Carols at the Brunch**

Why are Christmas trees so bad at sewing?

They always drop their needle



FUTURE EVENTS: DECEMBER—FEBRUARY

December			
Sat	6th	10:00am—1:00pm	Advent Brunch
Sun	7th	10:30am	Morning Service - Neil Carter
Sun	7th	2:00pm—5:00pm	Andrew Lane Lights Switch-on
Tues	9th	7:30pm	Ladies Meal at the Wilton
Sat	13th	7:30pm—11:30pm	Christmas Party at Dunscair Golf Club
Sun	14th	10:30am	Morning Service, Communion - Rev George Mwaura
Sat	20th	2:00pm	Dress Rehearsal for Sunday School Nativity
Sun	21st	10:30am	Nativity Service - Sunday School
Sun	21st	5:45pm	Carols on the Community Garden followed by mulled wine and mince pies in Church at 6:15pm
Sun	21st	6:30pm	Carol and Christingle Service - Ann Smith
Wed	24th	11:30pm	Midnight Candlelight Service - Rev George Mwaura & Andy Guthrie
Thurs	25th	10:30am	Christmas Day Family Service - Rev George Mwaura
Sun	28th	10:30am	Morning Service - Brian Evitts
January			
Sat	3rd	12:00pm—1:00pm	Brunch
Sun	4th	10:30am	Morning Service - David Canham
Sun	11th	10:30am	Morning Service, Communion - Andy Guthrie
Sun	11th	11:30am	Church meeting after morning service
Tues	13th	8:00pm	Housegroup at Val's 'Knowing God's Power' - 1 Kings ch 18
Sun	18th	10:30am	Morning Service - Rev George Mwaura
Sun	18th	3:00pm	C.T.I.A.B. Annual Service of Prayer for Christian Unity at Bank Top
Sun	25th	10:30am	Family Communion Service, Church Parade - Worship Group
Tues	27th	8:00pm	Housegroup at Val's 'Sin in the community' - Joshua ch 7
February			
Sun	1st	10:30am	Morning Service - Pat Rea
Wed	4th	7:30pm	Elders meeting at Andy's
Sat	7th	12:00pm—1:00pm	Brunch
Sun	8th	10:30am	Morning Service, Communion - Rev George Mwaura
Tues	10th	8:00pm	Housegroup at Val's - 1 Samuel ch 15 - meeting will be at Marian's
Sun	15th	10:30am	Morning Service - Andy Guthrie
Sun	22nd	10:30am	Songs of Praise Service - David and Christine
Tues	24th	8:00pm	Housegroup at Val's 'Tempted to compromise' - Daniel ch1

